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NOVEMBER 7.

The President, Dr. RUSCHENBERGER, in the chair.

Twenty-four members present.

The death of Wilhelm Ritter von Haidinger, a correspondent of the Academy, was announced.

Prof. COPE exhibited a specimen of a *Galeodes*, probably *G. pallipes* of Say, taken in the town of Denver, Colorado, by Dr. Gehrung. According to that gentleman, it was common in that place in houses, and was an enemy and destroyer of the *Cimex lectularius* (bedbug). In captivity, it showed a preference for them as food, and crushed them in its short chela, preliminary to sucking their juices.

Mr. THOMAS MEEHAN said that while travelling through a wood recently he was struck in the face by some seeds of *Hamamelis virginica*, the common Witch Hazel, with as much force as if they were spent shot from a gun. Not aware before that these capsules possessed any projecting power, he gathered a quantity in order to ascertain the cause of the projecting force, and the measure of its power. Laying the capsules on the floor, he found the seeds were thrown generally four or six feet, and in one instance as much as twelve feet away. The cause of this immense projecting power he found to be simply in the contraction of the horny albumen which surrounded the seed. The seeds were oval, and in a smooth bony envelope, and when the albumen had burst and expanded enough to get just beyond the middle where the seed narrowed again, the contraction of the albumen caused the seed to slip out with force, just as we would squeeze out a smooth tapering stone between the finger and thumb.

NOVEMBER 21.

The President, Dr. RUSCHENBERGER, in the chair.

Twenty-six members present.

The following paper was presented for publication:—

“Notes on Feldspars and some other Minerals of Philadelphia and vicinity.” By Theo. D. Rand.

Mr. THOMAS MEEHAN said that of all the problems that faced the botanist, few seemed more impenetrable than the law which governed the angular divergence in the branches of plants. Some 1872.]

grew quite prostrate, and others, though closely allied species, might be strictly erect. At the present season of the year we may note plants with prostrate leaves or branches, which in spring will have them of a sharp, upright angle. The verbascums at the present time, especially *V. blattaria*, had their root leaves so firmly pressed against the ground, that on lifting they would fall back with a spring; as soon as the central axis grew, the leaves from that would be almost upright. In some respects, erection or prostration became almost specific characters. The *Rubus villosus* usually grew erect even from infancy, and the *Rubus canadensis* generally trailed; yet the last-named would sometimes throw up strong erect stems, which could scarcely be distinguished in that stage from *R. villosus*. Again, the same species of tree would often produce individuals quite erect, and at other times very pendent, and hence we had in Horticulture the class of weeping trees. All trees seemed to have this power of producing pendent individuals. The oaks, ashes, poplars, elms, all furnished familiar examples.

It was usual with botanists to pass these things over as "weaknesses." But the term weakness explained nothing. To say that these plants had lost the power of erection, was simply restating the primary fact. Moreover, some of these prostrate forms had apparently more vigor than the erect ones. *Rubus canadensis* was weaker than *R. villosus*, truly; but, on the other hand, some of the Russian trailing junipers were far more vigorous than any of the upright forms. The weeping beech also was in appearance more vigorous than the ordinary forms. All beeches had their young growth pendent. As the growth matured, the branches became erect; but in the weeping form erection did not come with maturity, and hence it remained pendent. In the ashes, however, there was no pendency in the young growth; but the "weeping ash" was one of the most decided of all drooping trees. In such cases as these, the law which governed the angles of divergence must either be different in each case, or operate at different stages of the development of the branches.

In his late travels in the Rocky Mountains, he came on a tract covered profusely with one of the small creeping *Euphorbias*, probably *E. cordata*, in which a large quantity grew perfectly erect. Sometimes only a portion of the plant exhibited this character, at other times all the plant was upright. The specimens he exhibited were of the erect class. In all these cases the plant was attacked by a small fungus, *Æcidium euphorbiæ, hypericæfolia* of Schweinitz. He thought that the fact that this little fungus should be able to make a usually creeping plant, rooting from every joint, entirely lose this character and become erect, was worthy of some notice by students in this branch of botany.

[February 13,